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From The Times November 7, 2008

Bloody Sunday inquiry: 900 witnesses and 20 million words of evidence

David Sharrock, Ireland Correspondent

In just over four years, the Saville inquiry received statements from about 2,500 people relating to Bloody Sunday and the political turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The list of senior barristers and solicitors involved since its arrival in Londonderry for oral hearings in March 2000 includes Lord Gifford, QC, and Michael Mansfield, QC, who represented members of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four. Other leading lawyers involved include the former Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Allan Greene, QC; Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC; and Edwin Glasgow, QC.

Sitting alongside Lord Saville are the Honourable William L. Hoyt, formerly Chief Justice of New Brunswick, Canada, and the Honourable John L. Toohey, former Justice of the High Court of Australia. Lord Saville is not paid for his role in the inquiry, other than in his capacity as a law lord.

At a cost of £181 million, the inquiry is already one of the most expensive ever held. While the cost has been used as a criticism of the nationalists who pursued the need for a tribunal into the day's events, the greater part of the total has been paid to lawyers representing the British military and establishment. Numerous legal reviews of Lord Saville's decisions

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have also pushed costs up.

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Among the 922 witnesses called to give evidence were 505 civilians, nine forensic scientists and other experts, 49 journalists, photographers and camera operators and 245 military personnel.

Almost 40 politicians and civil servants, including intelligence officers, were called as well as seven priests, 33 former members of the RUC and 34 former members of paramilitary organisations,

including the Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness.

The inquiry received 160 volumes of evidence, containing an estimated 20 million to 30 million words and including 13 volumes of photographs. They also include 121 audiotapes and 110 videotapes.



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This is an obscene use of taxpayers money.

We could have a no fault system as in Sweden where responsibility is accepted but guilt is not sought out.

What money will the families get out this enquiry? Precious little I expect but lawyers have in some cases made millions.

The establishment will protect themselves no matter what the cost, while ordinary people can no longer afford access to legal representation. There should be a cap laid down in Law on what these enquires can cost. I'm proud of our legislature, they gave us Home Information Packs, need I say more?

Graham , St Albans, uk

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